



## Washburn to leave Interior, return to University of New Mexico

WASHINGTON – U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell announced on Dec. 10 that Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Kevin K. Washburn, after more than three years of leadership, will conclude his service to the department and will return to the faculty of the University of New Mexico School of Law in January.

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Lawrence “Larry” Roberts will lead Indian Affairs for the remainder of the Obama administration.

“Kevin is a tireless change agent for Indian Country and true partner in our efforts to chart a brighter future for Tribal communities through self-determination and self-governance,” said Jewell. “He is a thoughtful leader who provided a steady hand to modernize Indian Affairs to better serve Tribes, which will be felt by generations to come in Tribal communities across the country. It has been an honor to call him a colleague and friend, and I thank him for his selfless service.”

“The opportunity to serve Indian Country under the leadership of President Obama and Secretary Jewell, and with my colleagues in Indian Affairs at Interior, has been the highest privilege of my life,” Washburn said. “I have seen a level of trust develop with Tribes in the nation-to-nation relationship under President Obama that has not existed in more than 200 years of federal-Tribal policy. It has been a very special time. I appreciate Secretary Jewell for leading with her heart and conscience on Native issues and encouraging the entire federal government to live up to its trust responsibility to Tribes.”

Following Washburn’s departure, Roberts will serve as acting assistant secretary for Indian Affairs in January. Roberts is a member of the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin and has served in leadership at Interior since 2012. He previously served as general counsel of the National Indian Gaming Commission.

“Larry has been centrally involved in virtually every one of the department’s accomplishments in Indian Country the last three years and has been instrumental in developing a strong Indian Affairs team to carry the president’s work to the end of the administration,” said Jewell. “With Larry’s leadership, I am confident we will continue the strong momentum rooted in Tribal self-determination and self-governance that Kevin has helped reignite.”

Washburn advanced the administration’s commitment to Tribal self-



Courtesy photo by Michelle McKibben of Memories by Michelle

Jaretzi Alonso, Sinai Alonso and Lilianna Garcia visit with Santa Claus (Don Hamilton) during the Community Christmas Program in Siletz on Dec. 9.

See additional photos on page 13, plus photos of the Elders celebration on page 9.

The Siletz Tribe wishes you a safe and successful New Year.

## Washington refuge renamed Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge; treaty also commemorated

WASHINGTON – On Nov. 30, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Billy Frank Jr. Tell Your Story Act by a vote of 413-2. The bill, H.R. 2270, was sponsored by Rep. Denny Heck (D-WA) and will rename the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge in Washington state the Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge.

“Like many Washingtonians, I frequently pass the sign on I-5 indicating the way to the wildlife refuge. I cannot wait to make that drive and see the name of our friend Billy, who mattered so much to the health and welfare of our area. It will remind me of the special place we call home and the people that cared for its wellbeing,” said Heck. “I would like to thank everyone, notably Indian Country, the Republican majority and a unified Washington House delegation who joined together in this effort. This passage is a fitting tribute to Billy and the treaty rights he lent his advocacy to for a lifetime.”

Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) sponsored a companion bill, S. 2326, in the U.S. Senate on Nov. 19.

“Billy Frank Jr. spent his life fighting for treaty rights for Tribes and Indian people that had long been denied. He was a fierce guardian of our cherished salmon, the Puget Sound and the rich natural diversity that is revered by all of us who call Washington state home,” said Cantwell.

This act, along with updating the refuge name, also will establish the Medicine Creek Treaty National Memorial within the wildlife refuge to commemorate the location of the signing of the Medicine Creek Treaty of 1854 between the U.S. government and leaders of the Muckleshoot, Nisqually, Puyallup and Squaxin Island Indian Tribes.

Fawn Sharp, president of Quinault Indian Nation, president of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians and area vice president of the National Congress of American Indians, reflected on this news.

“This is such exciting news. Billy Frank Jr. continues to be the inspiration to so many Native Americans all across the country and beyond and to non-natives as well. He was a man whose dedication to our Mother Earth and sacred resources

will never be forgotten,” said Sharp. “I join people everywhere in thanking the members of the House, and especially Congressman Denny Heck, for having the wisdom and foresight to acknowledge Billy’s place in history in this way.”

NCAI President Brian Cladoosby, also chairman of the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community in Washington state, recently commented on the impact of Billy Frank Jr. when President Obama posthumously awarded Frank the Presidential Medal of Freedom in November.

“Billy’s voice spoke for the salmon and the resources and most importantly for the children of our future so they may have the rights preserved for them more than a century ago,” said Cladoosby.

NCAI membership passed a resolution at the 2015 Executive Council Winter Session supporting legislation to redesignate the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge as the Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge and to estab-